



Issaquah Chamber of Commerce Legislative Agenda
Top-Priority and Key Priority Issues for 2019-2020

Mission: The Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce is a catalyst for business growth, the convener of leaders and influencers, and the champion for the business community.

The Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce Board endorses and strongly advocates for the following pro-business actions in support of the overall economic vitality of Issaquah.

Successful implementation of these opportunities enables a strong, thriving business climate that helps make our community whole and provides for the needed jobs, services, and support citizens require. Our vision is to make the Greater Issaquah region the best place to do business on the Eastside and we call on the City to be a collaborator to this regard.

1) Collaborative Process

The Chamber values its relationship with the City and desires to work with the City and its Council to ensure Issaquah is a thriving and vibrant community. The Chamber asks that the city reaches out and asks the Chamber and the business community to provide input and comment on city actions, processes, and legislation with enough time to provide meaningful input so that the City can be informed regarding how its actions impact the business community.

2) Economic Vitality-Growth & Development, Housing & Jobs

As a collaborative effort, we must consistently work to support the local economy, local job base and local tax revenue that preserves Issaquah's quality of life. Business matters because it supports everything we hold dear in our community, and with the City we must put forth our collective efforts to encourage and sustain the generators of jobs, innovation, and economic vitality in our community.

There is concern amongst the business community there are unintended consequences of the changes to codes and process during the development of the CIP design guidelines and standards. The Chamber is concerned that these changes have become so stringent and costly, economic development for Issaquah will suffer. It is important that there be certainty as well as expedient, efficient and reliable review for those who desire to invest in our community.

NOTE: It is important to recognize moving through the legislative and administrative process; that business owners have limited time to commit to providing input while also running their business. We encourage the city to make the process as proficient as possible.

Development Standards:

- A) We ask that Council formally reviews the CIP dashboard bi-annually, that it requests feedback from Development Services and Economic Development on the type of projects in the pipeline as well as from its developer/broker forums.
- B) If findings are such that nothing or very little is happening, we strongly encourage short-term and times “incentives” be implemented to help facilitate and demonstrate to others the type of re-development Issaquah envisions on its valley floor-It’s central core for commerce jobs.

Growth & development:

The Chamber applauds the City for looking at the big picture, prioritizing what’s most important, as well in it’s planning endeavors. The Chamber encourages the City to look for ways to be action-oriented and innovative to:

- A) **Support** regional opportunities and solutions and coming from surrounding communities that will be of benefit to Issaquah and the Eastside.
- B) **Oppose** changes to the Urban Growth Boundary as it will create additional potential tension for our community and its economic vitality.
- C) **Ensure** the Urban Growth Boundary remains in its current location and provide support to King County’s 4/1 program. This is important to its economic vitality for Issaquah and its tax base, business and in ensuring its regional center vision is successful for the future.

More reliable/Redundant Infrastructure and Investment in Infrastructure:

- A) **Ensure** transparency to help the public to understand the pressures/constraints/opportunities the City faces (See Bellevue Utilities “Capitol investment prioritization of projects and the basis for it’s decisions. Provide information to residents and business owners regarding what changes are happening, when and why.
- B) **Ensure** we have reliable utilities/update outdated systems, and maintenance of the aging infrastructure. Business and residents alike need to understand well in advance what road construction and utility impacts are forthcoming.

- C) **Ensure** fiscal responsibility of our infinite financial resources and seek grant funding/leveraging of dollars through public/ private partnerships when the opportunities present themselves.
- D) **Support better power through** Puget Sound Energy's Energize Eastside. Issaquah needs a power grid that supports the needs of high tech, web-based economy and as expected by our citizens.
- E) **Support** preserving Issaquah's aquifer as it's main water source. Reduce our dependency on Cascade Water Alliance and cost associated with purchasing water.
- F) **Support** better fiber access for Issaquah. Issaquah needs fiber connectivity/accessibility if it is to recruit and retain business, particularly large corporate headquarters that provide technology-centric and knowledge wage jobs.
- G) **Follow** 5G phone service and look for best practices for its integration into Issaquah.

Housing:

Position Issaquah to be a leader in promoting innovative zoning and product options for housing (both rental and owned) such as accessory dwelling units, micro apartments, dorm-style apartments, etc. Enabling the free market to work which allows the developer to assume the risk and potential reward will help foster a livable, complete, compacted and connected town-a primary goal of the Central Issaquah Plan. It is important for a community to have multiple aspects of housing for each demographic and phase of life. Allowing the market to respond to supply and demand is the most effective way to stabilize rental rates over time as well as ensuring our business have access to a local workforce. To accomplish this, we are asking the City to:

- A) **Support** removing the requirement to include affordable housing in every multi-family residential development through inclusionary zoning or mandated units without incentives, as it drives up costs to the consumer and therefore, higher rents are extended to users.
- B) **Support** additional opportunities such as the ToD project and other ways to partner and /or incentivize the type and variety of development needed to accommodate housing needs.
- C) **Ensure** that as the Council receives reports regarding the CIP that it also studies inclusionary zoning without the MFTE. Should housing not follow suit as hoped, we request Council to consider extending the MFTE to all multi-family housing projects in its urban core area.
- D) **Support** alternative styles of accessory dwellings that create affordable housing options fostering support for extended families and allow family members (Primarily older adults) to live independently at a reduced cost.

Taxes:

- A) Oppose any local, county, regional and/or state initiatives to impose head tax.
- B) **Oppose** overburdening business with an increase to B&O taxes
- C) **Ensure** a Transportation Benefit District will not overtax our residents and business owners.

Economic Development:

- A) **Support** the implementation and success of the City's Strategic plan and related efforts.
- B) **Support** state and city tourism programs that drives events/ activities/information to a multitude of visitors from individual tourists to conferences and athletic competitions.
- C) **Support** Visit Issaquah's efforts and create a supportive review process that will ensure they remain on track and well-funded to strength the untapped opportunities of becoming a year-round destination.

3. Community/ Strategic Planning

We encourage the City to simplify and add necessary staffing to streamline and shorten timelines regarding the permitting process so that Issaquah can compete effectively with surrounding communities. Predictability and consistency impact decision making regarding whether a business will consider relocation to Issaquah.

A city's primary responsibility is to provide services, safety and utilities. We encourage the City and its council as part of it's strategic planning process transparent and efficient.

Jobs:

- A) **Support** business growth and development of both new and existing businesses that lead to new living wage jobs.

Olde Towne:

- A) **Support** niche business recognizing that it has its own unique character/.
- B) **Support** Ways to co-locate important functions such as garbage service and storm water.

Parking:

- A) **Support** changes in the code and interpretations that would reduce restrictive parking requirements for businesses.
- B) **Support** a parking resource plan

Transportation Needs

As a number one cited issue (traffic/local circulation) in the City's Business retention survey, the Chamber ask that the City place a high priority and focus on improvements that keep traffic flowing; constricting traffic negatively impacts business with reduced access and presents a challenge for its workforce/recruitment efforts.

- A) **Create master** mobility plan that is supported with transparent data and maps. Incorporate the TIP, CIP, Walk & Roll, Parks, Plan, etc. into one document and make it constructed. This provides for the opportunity to leverage resources and in looking at the big picture for construction/development, growth of a neighborhood.
- B) **Ensure** business voice is heard and incorporated in the study and design of Wisdom's Interstate Justification Report on Front Street/Gilman and the 10/12th street overcrossing.
- C) **Support** WSDot's I-90 shoulder lane hardening/enhancement (West and East bound) projects construction plans for 2020 as part of Connecting Washington transportation package.
- D) **Support** measures that will ensure funding and the timely completion of improvements to Highway 18. Highway 18 improvements will relieve congestion in Issaquah which will be essential to improved traffic flow and mobility.
- E) **Engage** the Chamber early in the study and re-design efforts on Gilman Blvd. Any refinements should complement findings and recommendations of the IJR as noted above.
- F) **Ensure** Gilman remains car centric as a local traffic circulator given proximity to goods, services, jobs and future and transit access. Keep the need for business access top of mind as well as the elements, that make it unique, such as the trees at the west end that creates the iconic look of Gilman Blvd.
- G) **Ensure** visibility and ease of access to business are priority considerations in all business districts.
- H) Start planning now for Sound Transit 3's Issaquah light rail location by:
 1. **Focus** on projects that aid in connecting the north and south sides of our community and that facilitate the inter city mobility first.

2. **Support** design plans on Gilman that include a local light rail stop central to I-90.
3. **Support** design of a light
4. rail stop that can be used to connect both sides of the City and provide a community hub.
5. **Advocate** for centrally locating one to two rail stops on the valley floor in the I-90 corridor where the greatest density (Urban Core) will occur over time. Citing a rail stop should be about people first and as a value ass amenity that compliments Issaquah (Not that detracts from its character)
6. **Engage** in the Transportation Summit and work closely with neighboring jurisdictions, King County and differing agencies to address transportation congestion and levels of service aimed at the needs of Issaquah.

The Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce remains committed to Issaquah's economic vitality and in helping craft policies that will enable Issaquah business community and citizens thrive.

We thank the City and its Council for your work on behalf of our community and for your commitment to Issaquah being the best possible city it can be. The Chamber and its Board look forward to being of service and collectively helping Issaquah. We are proud of our community and its accomplishments. If you have any questions, concerns or would like to meet for further discussions/brainstorm economic vitality and plans, please don't hesitate to ask. We look forward to the opportunity.

Kathy McCorry
Executive Director



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